

Approved For Release 2003/05/05 : CIA-RDP84-00780R004000060039-2

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16 February 1971

MEMORANDUM FOR: Director of Training

SUBJECT : Forum Panel on "The Agency and American Youth"

1. [] spoke for no more than twenty minutes, then opened up the session to questions from the audience. The two key questions were asked by [] of ONE and [] of OCI respectively. They were not so much questions as critical comments challenging the accuracy of what had been said ([] or the veracity of [] []).

2. [] had stated that, as far as recruitment was concerned, the Agency image was good. Many qualified persons were applying. [] said that [] was not telling the truth and that the Agency's image was bad among the students he knew at the better universities. [] conceded that we had fewer applicants from the famous Eastern universities than in the past, but reiterated that the overall picture was good.

3. [] had mentioned the high professional retention rate. [] challenged the seeming rosiness of this picture, stating that the best young people were leaving. [] replied that there was no evidence to support such a claim, but he conceded that whereas 3 out of 4 who left in the past indicated they were doing so because of better job offers on the outside, now 3 out of 4 cite dissatisfaction with their Agency jobs as the main cause.

4. Another asked why we kept recruiting people in the light of supposed personnel cuts. [] cited the minimum number we must recruit every year to replace those who leave, retire, or die -- even allowing for cuts in the T/O.

5. One asked why there was so much subjectivity in the fitness reports. [] replied that we were aware of this and frequently made modifications with a view to strengthening them.

6. Comment:

There is a certain ambiguity in the title which was reflected in the questions. Not everyone conceived the scope of the panel in the same way, although [] remarks made it clear that he was focusing on the recruitment and processing of young people who have recently entered CIA.

25X1 Thus, one questioner [] was concerned about the image of CIA
25X1 among the "American youth" that chooses not to join CIA -- presumably
because of that image. [] statistics referred to the largely
self-selected group that does join CIA. Other questioners conceived
of the panel as one on "The Agency (read 'the Agency's top management')
and American Youth" (read 'CIA youth'). For them it was an opportunity
to communicate their concerns to the upper echelons. It seems to me
25X1 that one should welcome this, making due allowances for a certain amount
of brashness. As for [] he did very well. He did not get angry
or cut down any one. He took all the questions seriously, and answered
them honestly, sticking to the studies and statistics available. All
this took place in an educational atmosphere of open discussion and academic
freedom. It was the right time, the right place, and the right way for a
free people to act.



25X1